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News Brief

Motorola Applies for \$50M in Grants for Bay Area Broadband Network (4/12/10)

Motorola submitted an application for \$50 million in federal broadband funds to help the Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) build and operate a broadband public-safety network called the Bay Area Wireless Enhanced Broadband (BayWEB). The Bay Area UASI is one public-safety group that has filed a waiver request with the FCC to use 700 MHz broadband spectrum.

In partnership with public-safety entities in the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo, San Francisco, Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Solano, Santa Cruz and Santa Clara, California, and multiple wireless broadband providers, Motorola described BayWEB as a middle-mile broadband network that will serve public-safety entities, community anchor institutions and end users throughout the 10-county Bay Area. Motorola said it will have an agreement with Verizon Wireless "to ensure that that public-safety users will be able to roam beyond the proposed middle mile network when needed as well as enjoy access to a commercial wireless network within the proposed funded service area, if necessary."

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) application said the BayWEB network will use 700 MHz spectrum and be deployed at about 200 unique radio sites across the proposed funded service area. Motorola's network deployment will include a public-safety subsystem to provide wireless broadband service to public safety and government users based on Long Term Evolution (LTE) and a public access subsystem to improve public broadband Internet access by community anchor institutions and business and residential end users.

Motorola said the cost of the project is \$72.5 million, and Motorola seeks a grant in the amount of \$50.6 million. Motorola proposed to make in-kind contributions to the project of \$21.9 million, which represents slightly more than 30 percent of the total budget. Motorola estimates that 48,000 public-safety users will use the public-safety subsystem by the end of the fifth year of the project.

The partnership is through an executed agreement between Motorola and the Alameda County Sheriff as executive sponsor and Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator for Region 2, on behalf of the Policy Group of the Bay Area Regional Interoperability Communications System (BayRICS). BayWEB is one of four subsystems under BayRICS. (See "Q&A" in the October 2009 issue of *MissionCritical Communications* for more information on BayRICS and BayWEB.)

Motorola noted its qualification for operating the network, citing other networks it operates, including the South Carolina Palmetto public-safety network with 76 sites and more than 25,000 users and the Illinois Starcom public-safety network with more than 200 sites and about 18,000

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users. The vendor also said it has deployed the Austria TETRON nationwide, Denmark Dansk Beredskabs Kommunikation (DBK) nationwide TETRA managed service, Australia MMR Victoria and Ireland nationwide TETRA managed service networks.

“The public-safety subsystem will improve and enhance the interoperability of public-safety communications across the region and enable emergency responders to have broadband access to mission-critical information, which will improve the delivery of health and safety services to millions of California residents,” the application said. “The system is scalable to accommodate public-safety networks throughout California and can serve as a model for future public-safety broadband build-outs throughout the United States.”

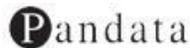
Motorola officials said the BayWEB project is dependent on Motorola's securing funding under NTIA's Comprehensive Community Infrastructure (CCI) program. This funding will permit Motorola to use the approximately 200 existing tower sites and other infrastructure in the Bay Area to deploy the network.

The public access subsystem will use unlicensed 5.2, 5.4 and 5.8 GHz spectrum and a broadband point-to-multipoint and point-to-point solution that will improve public broadband Internet access. The public broadband network will be open, and all local broadband providers will be able to interconnect at any of about 200 aggregation points, the application said.

The Commerce Department's NTIA said last week it received 867 applications requesting \$11 billion in funding for proposed broadband projects. These applications are for the second round of NTIA's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding aimed at expanding broadband access and adoption. NTIA allocated about \$2.6 billion for the second round of its Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). NTIA received requests for grants totaling more than \$11 billion.

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